



NEWS RELEASE

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Rel. No. 5-22-2006
May 16, 2006

COMPANIES FORM FOR NEW MISSION

By Amanda Kim Stairrett
Staff writer

As part of the new military transition team mission at Fort Riley, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, activated six 10-man companies April 28 during a reorganization and activation ceremony.

Companies D, I, K, L, M and N will train transition teams who will then have the “critical task” of training the Iraqi Army, said Col. Bart Howard, 1st Brigade Combat Team commander at the time. Howard has since relinquished command of the brigade.

Lt. Col. Frank Zachar, 1st Bn., 16th Inf., commander, said his heart got a little clinched up because of all that’s happening within his battalion.

“It’s a huge movement in this battalion; it’s a huge movement in our Army today, and it kind of chokes me up to feel that, as an ‘Iron Ranger,’ we’re part of this thing,” he said.

Zachar said Soldiers have been moved around to produce two large security force companies. Companies B and D are scheduled to deploy in late summer or early fall of this year.

“Those companies are destined for future fields, distant fields,” he said.

The remainder of the battalion will stay with the six new companies, Zachar said.

The battalion’s Company A is in the Horn of Africa supporting Operation Enduring Freedom by performing counter-terrorism missions and foreign internal defense training, Howard said.

“It’s hard to believe,” he said. “We’re there, we’re on the ground.”

Great things are on the horizon for the battalion, Zachar said after outlining the history of 1st Bn., 16th Inf. The battalion was created in May 1861, was one of four original infantry regiments used to create the 1st Infantry Division in 1917 and the first to engage the enemy in World War I.

The recent mission change means that even more history is being added to the battalion, something that chokes Zachar up and makes him proud at the same time.

“In some cases it’s very difficult personally, professionally for many Soldiers here to watch Soldiers leave, but it’s also very rewarding to be part of an activation and have new Soldiers come on board to create six new companies,” Zachar said.

“Don’t underestimate these missions. Security Force will be tough. It will require discipline, stamina, training, but I know you’re up to the task,” Howard said. “When people see you, they will see the patch on your uniform and you’ll be proud to say that you’re from the 16th Regiment, and that will mean a lot.”